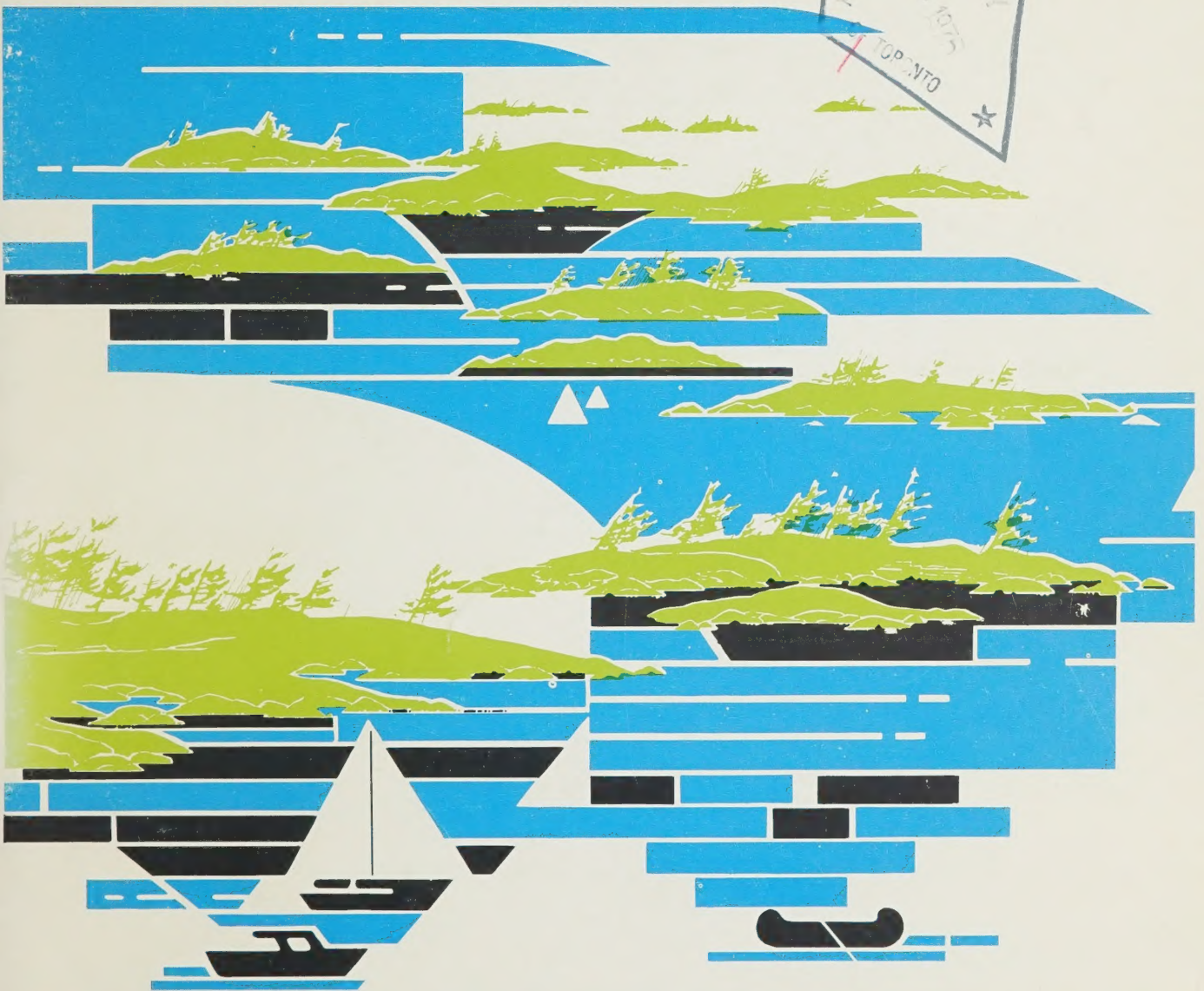
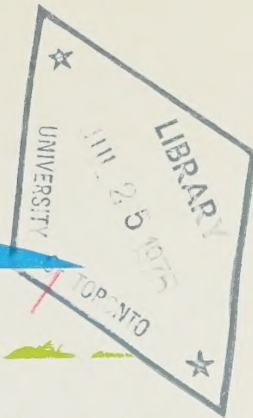


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Blackstone Harbour Provincial Park

Government
Publications


Public Participation
Phase 1



MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

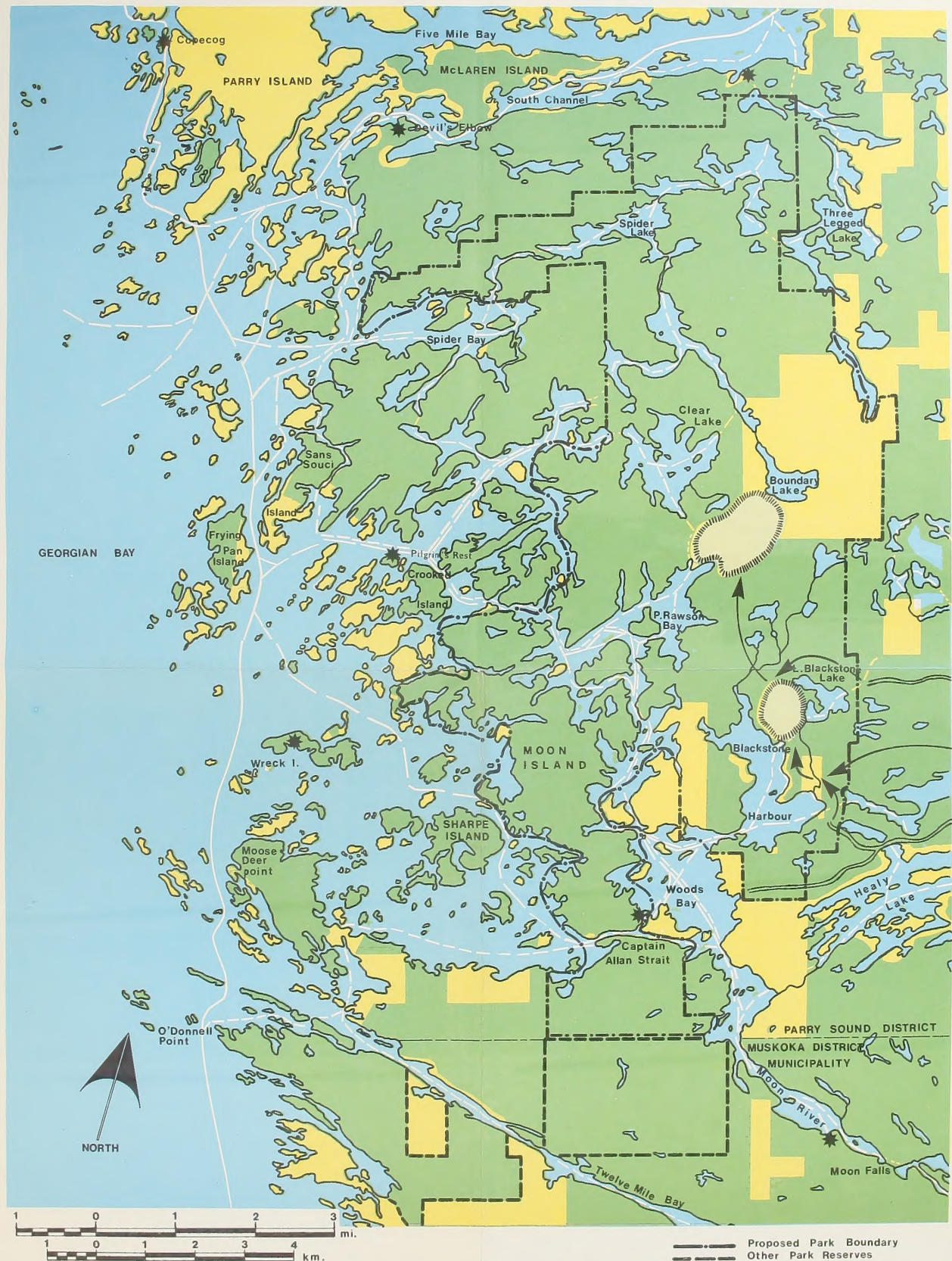
Division Of Parks
Minister Hon. Leo Bernier

Park Planning Branch
Deputy Minister Dr J. Keith Reynolds



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Blackstone Harbour Park Map

- Crown Lands
- Private Lands, Indian Reserves
- Picnic Sites

- Proposed Park Boundary
- Other Park Reserves
- Potential Development Areas
- Existing Trail & Potential Access
- Main Small Craft Channel (Marked)
- Alternate Channel (Usually Unmarked)
- Major Canoe Route



e Harbour Map

-
- Proposed Park Boundary
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Ontario

Ministry of
Natural
Resources

[General publications]

[G-15]

4 Miller Street
Parry Sound, Ontario
P2A 1S8

Our file number

Your file number

February 14, 1975

Dear Sir/Madam:

Re: Blackstone Harbour Provincial Park

Enclosed, herewith, please find copy of the Public Information Booklet on Blackstone Harbour Provincial Park.

This booklet highlights the Park Master Planning process in Ontario and its application to Blackstone Harbour Provincial Park. It also contains certain background information on the Park.

If you would like to submit written comments and suggestions on any aspect of the Park's current or future development and management, please submit same on the enclosed Comment Sheet at an early date to the following address:-

W.R. PECK
DISTRICT MANAGER
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
4 MILLER STREET
PARRY SOUND, ONTARIO
P2A 1S8

Please consider this letter an invitation to take an active part in the planning and future development of Blackstone Harbour Provincial Park.

Thank you for your interest.

Yours truly,

W.R. Peck
W.R. Peck, District Manager
Parry Sound District
Tel: 705-746-2141

wrp/dp
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INSERT: COMMENT SHEET

LETTER FROM THE DISTRICT MANAGER

BACKGROUND	1
Introduction and Explanation of the Provincial Park Master Planning Process	1
MASTER PLANNING AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAMME . .	3
CONTEXT	4
Regional Setting	4
Access	5
Other Parks	5
Status and Description	6
NATURAL RESOURCE INFORMATION	7
Geology and Geomorphology	7
Climate	8
Limnology	9
Biology	9
CULTURAL RESOURCE INFORMATION	11
History	11
Archaeology	13
A NAME FOR OUR PARK	14
POSSIBLE ADDITIONS	15
RECREATION POTENTIAL	16
RECREATIONAL USE AND DEMAND PRESSURES	18



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BACKGROUND

Introduction and Explanation of the Provincial Park Master Planning Process

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources in 1967 initiated a programme to master plan all 117 provincial parks in Ontario. This task will take a number of years to complete but already there are 45 master planning projects underway on both new and existing provincial parks throughout the Province.

Last summer, 1974, the Ministry initiated preliminary work for a master plan of the proposed park at Blackstone Harbour. In keeping with its desire to notify the public and to request open participation in all master planning exercises, the Ministry has prepared this information booklet to help you, the interested citizen, understand the planning process and participate in the planning of the Park.

Your first questions may focus on what is a Master Plan, what is its intended purpose and what does it accomplish?

A Master Plan is a written document which establishes detailed policy guidelines for each provincial park for long term development and management. It looks at all the known issues and sets a policy concerning them so that a sound resource management programme can be implemented for the long term benefit of all the citizens of Ontario. The Plan is prepared to cover certain points and the major ones are outlined below:

1. A Master Plan examines the Region or Market Area in which the park is located to ascertain the existing supply of recreation opportunities, the type and extent of facilities offered, the transportation linkages and population projections in relationship to the characteristics of the potential park user and resultant demand for the park site.
2. A Master Plan analyzes all ecological, cultural and physical aspects of the Park, thereby ensuring that provincially significant and sensitive environments are not disturbed.
3. A Master Plan assesses the environmental limitations of the site and ensures that these limitations are not exceeded when development occurs.
4. A Master Plan defines the classification of the park, such as Natural Environment, Recreation, Nature Reserve, Wilderness, Wild River or Historical, thereby indicating the nature and intensity of facilities and variety of recreational opportunities to be offered.
5. A Master Plan formulates the Goal for the park and defines the Objectives by which this Goal may be attained. This establishes the individual "character" of the park and its place in the total Provincial Parks System.
6. A Master Plan outlines Development Alternatives permissible within the limitations mentioned in number 3 and recommends a concept plan to be pursued.
7. A Master Plan defines a Visitor Services Programme from which a process evolves to enable the park visitor to enjoy the features and attributes of the environment which he visits.
8. A Master Plan establishes Management and Site Planning guidelines.

Work on points 1, 2 and 3 commenced during the summer of 1974. The remainder will be worked on during the winter and spring of 1974-75.

MASTER PLANNING AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAMME

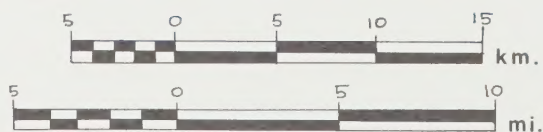
The Ministry is seeking and encouraging public involvement in the planning of this park. The major planning stages are as follows:

- | | | |
|---------|--|--|
| Stage 1 | Inventory of | (a) Natural Resource Information:
ecological, biological, geological
geomorphological; |
| | | (b) Cultural Resource Information:
historical, archaeological; |
| | | (c) Visitor Information: Visitor
use surveys and statistics. |
| Stage 2 | Establishment of Park Capabilities, Goals, Objectives
and Classification. | |
| Stage 3 | Development and Evaluation of Park Concept Alternatives | |
| Stage 4 | Preparation of a Preliminary Master Plan | |

The Ministry has almost completed Stage 1 at present and has prepared this booklet to aid in the public participation programme. It is hoped that this booklet will encourage written comments and suggestions. If any interest group or individual wishes to express his or her views with Ministry staff at an informal meeting, times can be arranged. The original resource reports are also available for perusal at the Parry Sound District Office and the Huntsville Regional Office. Comments and suggestions should be submitted by March 21, 1975.



scales:



REGIONAL SETTING

Upon receipt of your suggestions and comments, the Ministry will prepare a document that will summarize these and all of the major issues identified and a full range of possible solutions. This document will be distributed for public reaction. After evaluating your further comments and suggestions, the Ministry will proceed with the preparation of the preliminary master plan which in turn will be made available to the public. The Ministry is looking at mid-1975 for completion of this stage. Upon further public input, a final master plan will be produced.

All distribution to individuals or interest groups will be done through a Ministry mailing list. If you wish to be placed on such a list, contact:

District Manager
Ministry of Natural Resources
4 Miller Street
Parry Sound, Ontario

Also, copies will be available, upon request, at the Parry Sound District Office or at the Division of Parks, Whitney Block, Queen's Park, Toronto.

CONTEXT

Regional Setting

The Blackstone Harbour Proposed Park extends along the Georgian Bay shore from the mouth of the Moon River in the south to near Parry Sound in the north. It includes more than a dozen lakes, many tens of miles in the shoreline of Georgian Bay and several islands including the very large Moon Island.



ACCESS ROUTES & OTHER PARKS

The park will occupy parts of the unorganized Townships of Conger and Cowper and a small portion of the municipal Township of Foley, all in the District of Parry Sound. Administratively the park will fall within the Parry Sound District of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Access

People will be able to get to the new park from the north or south via Highway 69. This highway connects to the south via Highway 103 and 400, as well as to the east with Highway 11. These routes put Toronto residents well within a three hour drive of the park. The entrance of the park will probably be immediately north of the town of MacTier and approximately 35 miles south of Parry Sound, exiting from Muskoka Road No. 11 and the Healey Lake Road. The Ministry of Transportation and Communications has planned to increase the capacity of the Highway 69 and 103 corridor in the near future. This would make the new park even more convenient to the south.

Other Parks

There are 5 other parks on the Highway 103 - 69 corridor. Also, Arrowhead Provincial Park and to some extent Algonquin Provincial Park may be serving the same market. In order to determine what level of development a park will require, we must review the attendance and occupancy of nearby Provincial Parks. A July - August occupancy rate exceeding 60% means that a park is near capacity for most purposes, being full on week-ends and turning people away. A short summary of the 1974

statistics follows:

Provincial Park	Area in Acres	Number of Camp- Sites	Number of Camper Days	Number of Day Users	July-August Occupancy Rates	Class'n of Park
Oastler Lake	49	160	44,069	3,861	96%	Recreation
Killbear	3,000	970	222,808	4,901	81%	Natural Environment
Sturgeon Bay	20	82	22,963	811	98%	Recreation
Six Mile Lake	183	191	43,090	10,321	71%	Recreation
Grundy Lake	6,310	520	109,253	7,134	75%	Natural Environment

It is obvious that these parks are crowded. This indicates a need for more campground facilities.

Status and Description

At present the lands that will eventually be the park are park reserve, Crown reserve, Crown lands (all in green on the park map) and patented lands (in yellow on the park map). The park reserve (15,000 acres) was set aside in 1968 and other lands were included for park purposes in 1973. This brings the total acreage up to approximately 25,000 acres. In addition, there are adjacent lands (all Crown land) which local citizens have proposed be included within the park. These include 4 areas: the northwestern headland, the western headland near Sans Souci Island, some as yet unspecified Crown islands and an area around the Moon River. The Ministry hopes by distributing this booklet to solicit public opinion on the inclusion or elimination of any additions.

NATURAL RESOURCE INFORMATION

Geology and Geomorphology

The proposed park sits on part of the extremely hard bedrock of the Canadian Shield. These rocks, some of the older in Canada, were formed about 1 billion years ago by the forces of heat and pressure beneath the earth's surface, and make up the majority of the province. The undulating surface and the impermeable nature and variety of minerals combine to give the shield a changing appearance that is so characteristic of the "north" and so different from most of Southern Ontario.

More recently (geologically speaking) the province was covered and recovered by several successive glaciations or ice ages. Each of these glaciations had the effect of scraping much of the soil and loose debris from the shield and depositing it in Southern Ontario and further south. The last glaciation, called the Wisconsin, between 10,000 and 70,000 years ago, had the effect of shaping the surface of the province as witnessed today. This is readily evident in the Blackstone area where the only unconsolidated debris is a stony till. This is usually in the form of boulders or thin beds of pebbles and sand widely scattered throughout the area. In some preferred locations the process of wave action from the glacial Great Lakes which undated the park area after the retreat of the ice sorted the sands into small "pocket" beaches.

This type of terrain has few areas of suitable soil depth to sustain intensive development.

Climate

Southern Ontario's climate differs appreciably from one location to another, and from one year to another. The local variations are created by topography, the proximity of the Great Lakes, and the prevailing winds. Variations from year to year depend on the nature and frequency of weather systems which cross the area. Warm summers, mild winters and long growing season generally prevail. Precipitation is fairly uniformly distributed throughout the year averaging between 2 and 4 inches each month.

The Blackstone Harbour area differs from most of Southern Ontario with its high annual precipitation, especially snowfall. It is generally colder than areas near the lower lakes and warmer than inland areas. The short summary that follows compares some statistics for these variables.

Average Monthly Temperature in °F	January	April	July	October
Blackstone Harbour	17°F	44°F	67°F	48°F
Toronto	25°F	44°F	69°F	51°F
Algonquin Park	10°F	38°F	65°F	44°F

Average Annual Precipitation		Average Annual Snowfall	Average Number of Days with Snow Cover
Blackstone Harbour	40"	112" +	127
Toronto	31"	55"	59
Algonquin Park	32"	80"	154

Limnology

A limnological study (M.N.R. 1973) supplied some reassuring facts about the waters of Georgian Bay and the inland lakes. Firstly, there was no evidence of organic pollution in any of the inland lakes. The inshore waters of Georgian Bay were slightly more productive than the inland lakes. Secondly, there was no evidence of the presence of gasoline or lubricating oil even in waters which were heavily used by motorboats.

Generally, the waters are "soft" and can be described as of low fertility, meaning that they are low in nitrogen, phosphorous, iron and total solids. They do not have enough nutrients to support much plant or animal life. This condition is called oligotrophic as opposed to eutrophic. With one exception, Kingshott Lake, the lakes in the park area can be described as being unspoiled. This points out the responsibility to properly plan the park to prevent the deterioration of this heritage of clean waters.

Biology

The majority of the reserve is covered by a mixed forest dominated by white pine, sugar maple, hemlock, basswood, white birch and other species. Along the Georgian Bay shoreline a more open, largely coniferous forest is in evidence. These forests, twisted by lake winds, include red oak, white pine, and common juniper as dominant species. On some of the better developed soils inland, a deciduous maple - beech forest occurs.

Generally, the area can be called a "tension" zone; a number of species of plants and animals approaching either the northern

or southern limit of their range in this area. Also, quite a large number of plants are found here which have a very restricted distribution. A few of the more notable are meadow beauty, white fringed orchis and several aquatic species, including floating heart and several kinds of pond-weed.

Among the mammals, fox, raccoon, marten, striped skink, fisher, mink, muskrat, beaver, otter and white-tailed deer are fairly common. There is evidence of small populations of moose, wolf and lynx as well. Perhaps the most significant biological value in the reserve is the breeding grounds of the Prairie Warbler. This southern bird, (which does not breed on prairies at all), is represented here in what is the most northerly and probably the largest single breeding population in Canada.

Of special interest is the Massasauga rattlesnake. This shy and retiring snake is confined almost entirely to the Georgian Bay shore, rarely being observed very far inland. The "rattler" prefers swamps and bogs. There is no data on the snake's abundance, but local residents suggest that a person living on the shoreline may expect to see one or two of these snakes per summer. This species is important to the natural values of Blackstone as its range and abundance in the province is shrinking rapidly.

Of interest to sportsmen, the park area is quite near the Moon River, a well known yellow pickerel fishery. Fishermen have been drawn to the Moon for decades seeking the very large trophy specimens of yellow pickerel (or walleye), which are most readily caught in the spring and late fall. It must be noted that the

Moon River is an expert's fishery. Moon River presents opportunity to catch walleye and muskellunge amidst unique and beautiful surroundings.

Overall, there is a fairly large number of interesting plants and animals with which a visitor may come in contact. The relative isolation and resulting fairly low population pressure on the land has perpetuated this condition. We must be very careful in planning the park to maintain this situation.

CULTURAL RESOURCE INFORMATION

History

The history of the Blackstone Harbour Park Reserve encompasses a time span of less than 100 years, but is surprisingly complex.

Three historical themes are represented in the history of the Blackstone Harbour Park Reserve: lumbering, mining and human settlement.

The period before the turn of the century was the white pine era along Georgian Bay. Timber was cut and hauled to the coast either by horses or floated to the shore via Spider Lake, the Blackstone River to Blackstone Harbour or down the Moon River to Woods Bay. The logs were then boomed together and towed to the mills at Parry Sound, Midland and Penetanguishene.

The end of the pine era ushered in the beginning of the hemlock era. Hemlock bark was stripped from the trees and shipped

to Midland and Penetang for the manufacture of tannin, a substance used in the tanning of leather.

The tan bark era ended around World War I with the discovery of a synthetic substitute for tannin. Hardwood then became the primary species cut.

Among the historical themes of the reserve, one of the most interesting is the mining theme, though it was short lived, localized and had little impact on the inhabitants of the area.

Active exploration of a mineralized zone extending northeast along the shore of Spider Bay and Spider Lake commenced in 1899. Extraction of copper, at the Wilcox Mine, began in 1903 eventually including a system of two shafts and eight open pits. Active work on the mine ceased in 1904. Additional exploratory drilling in 1939 and again in 1951 delineated a second deposit of zinc and copper approximately one-half mile north of the Wilcox Mine. However, similar to the initial mineral operations, subsequent extraction did not prove to be economically feasible at that time.

The first settler in the reserve area was Bill Myers who settled near the Moon Falls in 1895. A second concentration of people was in the Blackstone Harbour area. The earliest settler there was Thomas Baker who had a farm north of Blackstone Harbour in 1904. He lived most of his life as a recluse seldom venturing from his farm, except to sell his produce to tourists during the summer. He died in 1940.

Two other families with a long association with the Bay are the Gropps, who ran a sawmill at the entrance of Blackstone Harbour

until 1947, and the Gregoires, who were involved with the lumbering activities since the turn of the century.

Archaeology

In all, many site locations were found. With one exception, sites represent deposits of quartz tools or debris around quarrying areas. A few sites may be hunting camps. No bone tools were recovered but two sites contained flint. The amount of archaeological material present on sites varied considerably; some had a good representative sample of tools, while others had barely enough tools to be designated as an archaeological site.

Most of the tools were quickly produced disposable core and flake tools. All the tools found were related to hunting-gathering activities. Little evidence of artifacts related to ceramic cultures or agriculturalists was uncovered. Pottery and agriculture are later evidences of more advanced and more recent cultures. The lack of this evidence would place these sites at pre 1000 B.C. Due to the absence of stratigraphy and charcoal for Carbon-14 analysis, a more exact date cannot be ascribed to the sites.

In order to rate the sites according to their archaeological importance, a rating scheme has been devised.

Sites rated "A" contain a good deposit of tools which are regarded as diagnostic and highly significant archaeologically. Sites rated "B" contain at least one tool regarded as diagnostic which provides irrefutable evidence of the presence of prehistoric man; however, data are insufficient to allow broad interpretation.

The "C" sites are of dubious origin.

The following chart shows the number of sites of each ranking:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Quarry</u>	<u>Deposit</u>
A	3	4
B	13	3
C	14	1

Due to the absence of characteristic projectile points in the Blackstone Harbour assemblage, the material cannot be related to any other archaeological group. This is unique by itself.

It is known that Huron and Algonkian fishermen plied the Georgian Bay coast in search for fishing grounds. It would be naive to assume that they would have neglected to exploit the pickerel spawning grounds at Moon Basin and the rich fishing grounds out to and including Moon Island.

In conclusion, prehistoric activity in the Blackstone Harbour Park Reserve area was limited to a group of pre-ceramic, quartz tool using, hunter-gatherers resident in the area.

A NAME FOR OUR PARK

In recent years the Ministry of Natural Resources has paid more attention to the naming of parks. A name should help to tell people where a park is or something about it. Examples of parks with descriptive names include Bronte Creek Provincial Park, located on Bronte Creek and Polar Bear Wilderness Park, located on the tundra and in part inhabited by polar bears.

The park on Georgian Bay, which we are calling Blackstone Harbour for now, could have any of a large number of names reflecting the many aspects and place names that influence it. The boundaries of the park will include Blackstone Harbour, Little Blackstone Lake and part of the Blackstone River, but not Blackstone Lake or most of the length of the Blackstone River. This fact and the fact that these features are located only in the extreme southerly part of the park diminish the suitability of a name with the word Blackstone in it.

The park will be oriented towards the 30,000 islands and could have a name that reflects this, but on the other hand it is within range of only a small portion of the south central islands. In addition, the proximity of Georgian Bay Islands National Park would cause confusion. The park will have wilderness values and activities, especially in the Spider Lake area, but it will also have more intensive activities such as camping, especially near Blackstone Harbour. One dimension of the park experience will also most certainly be the Moon River and Moon River Falls. Also, Moon Island is an integral part of the park. The drawback to the inclusion of the word Moon as a name is that the Moon River is not now within the boundaries of the proposed park, nor is Moon Falls. All suggestions for a name will be given serious consideration.

POSSIBLE ADDITIONS

The boundaries of the proposed park are outlined on the park map (insert). This provides space for extensive recreation with special nodes of intensive recreation in an area of 25,000 acres.

There are areas of Crown land however, which are very near to or adjacent to the park and which could be added. Some local groups have already made proposals to this effect.

RECREATION POTENTIAL

Blackstone Harbour Park Reserve includes an outstanding combination of resource opportunities focusing on the 30,000 islands of Georgian Bay which include the inner protected shoreline, the middle island maze and the rugged windswept outer island fringe, long epitomized in Canadian art and literature.

The inner shoreline includes key nodes of deep soil (Blackstone Harbour proper and Port Rawson Bay) which are suitable for car camping and can act as departure points to the middle and outer islands. The protected waters are ideal for novice boating and sailing.

In the northern part of the reserve the isolated inland lake watershed, including Clear, Boundary and Spider Lakes, combined with the inner islands provides a unique opportunity for day and extended canoe tripping experiences on the mainland - 'Bay' interface.

Indeed, the boater, sailor and canoeist have the opportunity to progress from the relatively protected inner shoreline to the 'Bay wilderness' experience of the outer islands. This experience can be pursued by the visitor over a period of visits to the park or in one visit.

Nowhere else does a provincial park provide such a variety and extent of deep water, protected boating opportunities for all types of craft. People not experienced with "The Bay" may wish to visit the many channels and bays along the sheltered small craft channels and stop for a meal at one of the picnic sites. Nearly 100 miles of the shore of Georgian Bay from Moon River Falls (on the Moon River) to Parry Sound can be followed without seeing the same land twice. The sailor may want to stay near his departure point while sailing in interesting yet safe waters.

On subsequent visits, when he has more confidence, the outer islands may be the boater's goal. The water, wind, rocks and pines provide the visitor with a rare feeling of closeness to nature. The challenge and thrill of navigating the blue-green waters with their countless islands and shoals is an unparalleled experience. Whether wind, motor or muscle powered, being out on "The Bay" is unforgettable. Some of the islands are fairly large and have a forest cover suitable for exploration and shelter, but many are low rock ridges with only a few of the peculiarly wind-contorted white pines so common to the islands. Nowhere on those islets can you avoid the crash and splash of the ever-present ground swell breaking on the exposed western shorelines. A shore dinner on these islands comes complete with sound and spray.

Only the most competent canoeists will want to test the waters of the outer fringe; most will be content to travel the inland lakes. There is a variety here as well. Spider Lake is a long narrow lake, much favoured by canoeists because of the protection

from the wind. It connects with the interior beyond the park boundary via Three Legged Lake and with Georgian Bay at several points. The western end of the lake is the site of a short portage to "The Bay" which by-passes a narrow rapids, once the location of a timber slide used to move white pine logs to saw-mills in Parry Sound. Farther south there is a portage to Clear Lake, a star-shaped lake with many bays, very much unlike Spider Lake. Boundary Lake to the south has a long gently curving shoreline and is dissimilar to either Spider or Clear Lake. There are many portages which allow easy travel from the interior, out to and along the Georgian Bay shore and back into the lakes again.

The recreation potential of the Blackstone Harbour Park Reserve for boaters of all types is incomparable.

RECREATIONAL USE AND DEMAND PRESSURES

Recent studies have shown that Central Ontario Region, which includes Toronto residents, is undersupplied with car camping opportunities. This is borne out by the fact that the provincial parks within easy reach of Toronto along the Highway 60 corridor are operating at capacity and often must turn away visitors. The following chart shows the percentage of July and August days during 1974 that the listed Provincial Parks exceeded 95% capacity

Grundy Lake	14%
Sturgeon Bay	86%
Killbear	23%
Oastler Lake	73%

The campground density of Killbear and Oastler Provincial Parks both exceed 5 sites per acre. Such high densities are not in keeping with a Natural Environment park concept because of the resulting impact on the soil surface, vegetation and the experience of the visitor. For this reason, many of the Highway 69 corridor parks have had to eliminate or rest campsites. This has diminished the supply of campsites significantly at Killbear and Oastler Lake Provincial Parks.

Blackstone Harbour Park Reserve has the capability to alleviate some of these campsite deficits and the pressure on Highway 69 parks. Our surveys have revealed two areas to be suitable for development (park map insert). Area I in the south (over 100 acres) should probably be developed first because of its closer proximity to road access. There is enough space in this area to develop a fairly low density natural environment campground of 2 or 3 sites per acre. Area II in the north is larger than Area I and could stand the same density.

These two car camping areas could be used by interior canoe trippers as departure points to the Spider Lake - Clear Lake routes which are presently being used by many "trippers" as part of a larger network of canoe routes going beyond the park. This aspect of the park experience could be enhanced by the establishment of suitable interior campsites for family groups. Another approach is to use this area only for day use.

In response to the growing demand for day use facilities from cottagers and the boating public, and to alleviate the indiscriminate use of private lands, a system of picnic sites was

established on Georgian Bay north and south of the town of Parry Sound.

The subsequent growth of boat-in and canoe-in camping has again posed problems. One solution is to provide designated boat-in campground nodes with the necessary sanitary facilities.

Blackstone Harbour Park Reserve has the potential to provide for some of this new demand within the island maze of Moon Island and selected mainland points. Is this a desirable development and, if so, where should it be located?

There are a diversity of other recreational activities both summer and winter requiring individual environmental backdrops which could be allowed in this park reserve. Each has to be considered on its own merits within the context of the resource values, desired level of development for the park and the goals and objectives for this park reserve.

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